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ABSTRACT

This report offers a different perspective on education statistics by highlighting rarely used "stand-alone" statistics on public education, inputs, outputs, and descriptions, and it uses interactive statistics that combine two or more statistics in an unusual way. It is a report that presents much evidence, but few conclusions. It is not intended to answer many questions, but rather to change the questions that are asked. The first area considered is that of education finance. Tables of per-pupil spending indicate that geography appears to account for the majority of the difference in spending, although there are many unexpected findings in these charts. These tables also bring into question the widely held belief that urban districts are starved for resources compared to nonurban districts. In general, the tables indicate that large urban districts are spending more per pupil than the large suburban districts. It also appears that wealthy and poor school districts allocate their funds in approximately the same percentages no matter where they are located. Observing how much is spent on labor costs in a school district raises a whole new set of questions, as does an examination of the labor pool. Support for increased education spending is de facto a call for increased spending on teachers. Some other issues are also deserving of a view that differs from that usually taken. Dialogue is necessary about special education. Current practices are making illiteracy a disease, and the question of the proper role for special education merits increased attention. Teacher mobility and peer review are other issues that deserve more attention in policy debates. The gender, racial, and ethnic makeup of the nation's public work force has become a political football, but so far there is little research concerning the real effects of the demographic characteristics of teachers on academic achievement. (Contains 13 tables.) (SLD)

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ED 422 429

One Yard Below

Education Statistics from a Different Angle

A Report of the Education Intelligence Agency

March 1998

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

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TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

Let it work; For 'tis the sport to have the enginer hoist with his own petard: and't shall go hard.
But I will delve one yard below their mines and blow them at the moon.

— Hamlet, Act III, Scene IV

Public education is a perennial concern in the United States. And in a time of peace and a healthy economy, it becomes a primary concern. Today's student is tomorrow's banker, lawyer, assembly-line worker, architect, politician and teacher. Americans worry that the public schools of today are not producing graduates who are prepared for the world of tomorrow.

As public sentiment goes, so go the actions of politicians. At all points along the ideological spectrum, there is no shortage of ideas about fixing public education. One cannot be a viable candidate for elected office without a plan or initiative for education. From the separation of school and state on one side to an increased federal role in curriculum, funding and standards — and at all gradations in-between — scholars, activists, pundits, administrators and the guy down at the corner bar have a plan to improve public education. Studies are done, seminars are held, and debates rage on.

And all sides go to education statistics to bolster their positions.

Every year Americans are barraged with statistics about education. In some cases they provide useful information. More often, however, they are designed to promote a specific way of looking at the education status quo.

Education statistics fall into three categories: outcomes, inputs and descriptions.

Outcomes include data such as test scores, graduation and dropout rates, surveys of parent and student satisfaction, and tracking of achievement and income after school is completed.

Inputs include spending, teacher training, textbooks and supplies, class size and curriculum.

Descriptions include teacher and student demographics, enrollment, number of instructional days, and size of staff.

These statistics are used everyday to frame the debate on public education. Teachers use state and district salary rankings to bargain for higher pay. Principals use enrollment figures to call for class size reduction and infrastructure support. Per-pupil spending is used as a barometer to determine a community's commitment to quality education.

Critics of the education establishment also use statistics. Stagnant or declining SAT scores, lack of correlation between spending and achievement, and growth in school bureaucracies are their arguments of choice.

Unfortunately, we may have reached the point where the statistics themselves are driving the debates. Per-pupil spending, for example, is certainly the most cited education statistic. It appears in news stories, government reports and public policy advocacy studies. Yet per-pupil spending is only one way of describing public school expenditures — and not the most accurate way at that.

As a statistic, per-pupil spending is very useful information. But as part of the policy debate, it can be used only one way: more is better. When was the last time you heard someone say we need to spend less per pupil?

When a push is on to increase spending on public schools, what pictures are broadcast on your local TV news? Usually you see out-of-date textbooks, broken school windows, leaking pipes and overcrowded classrooms. The message is clear: the solution to these problems is increased funding to buy new books, repair the windows and pipes, and build new schools. Yet these activities make up only a small percentage of current school spending.

The use of most education statistics is to build a foundation for a particular perspective or agenda. This report attempts, in the words of Shakespeare's Hamlet, to "delve one yard below." It offers a different perspective on the facts and numbers of public education inputs, outcomes and descriptions. It does this in two ways: 1) it highlights rarely used, "stand alone" statistics compiled by the U.S. Department of Education; and 2) it utilizes "interactive statistics." Interactive statistics simply means combining two or more statistics in a different or unusual way. The clearest example of this in the report is a state ranking of instructional payroll benefits expressed as a percentage of salary. Such a formulation may be more useful than a simple state salary ranking. Perhaps low-salaried teachers receive relatively high benefits. Perhaps well-paid teachers are shortchanged on benefits.

The purpose of this study is to provide just such information. And though the report includes many tables of state rankings, higher is not necessarily better nor lower worse. Is it better to be a high-salary, low-benefit state or a low-salary, high-benefit state? Who knows? The Education Intelligence Agency doesn't, but suddenly the debate over teacher salaries contains more nuance and subtlety. Perhaps even more room for agreement.

You may find it unusual that this report presents so much evidence but draws so few conclusions. Unlike many studies, this one does not aim to supply answers, but merely to change some of the questions we ask.

I. Education Finance

During the 1994-95 school year, Americans spent $278,966,000,000 on public education. The federal government accounted for 6.8 percent of this spending with the rest divided about equally between state and local government agencies. Over 44.1 million enrolled students were supervised by 3.3 million teachers, principals and other instructional staff. That year, every man, woman and child in the United States contributed $1,071 to the support of public schools. Public education is obviously a large-scale government enterprise that requires an equally large commitment of resources.

The most common statistic in reference to school finance is per-pupil spending. There are many different ways to express per-pupil spending and, unfortunately, commentators often fail to emphasize these subtle distinctions. Generally, the money factor used for computation is either current expenditures or total expenditures. Total expenditures are current expenditures plus capital outlay and interest on school debt. The pupil factor used for computation is either total enrollment or average daily attendance (ADA). The simplest way to express this distinction is to say that ADA tells us how many students attended school on an average day, while enrollment tells us how many *should have* attended.

So we have four different ways of figuring per-pupil spending for any specific year. Each table in this report specifies which formulation it is using, but use caution when comparing per-pupil spending figures from one table to those of another.

We generally see per-pupil spending statistics set out in a ranking of states, so that Connecticut's spending can be compared to New York's. However, per-pupil spending may vary widely within a state, with neighboring districts spending significantly different amounts of money per pupil. Perhaps it would be useful to compare district to district, rather than state to state.

Tables 1 and 2 are a top 25 and bottom 25 per-pupil spending ranking of districts with more than 20,000 students. The tables use current expenditures for 1993-94 and fall enrollments based on U.S. Census figures. The average for all U.S. districts with more than 20,000 students was $5,249.

TABLE 1.

District	State	Per-pupil spending	District	State	Per-pupil spending
1) Newark	NJ	$10,683	14) New York City	NY	$7,504
2) Yonkers City	NY	$9,322	15) St. Louis City BOE	MO	$7,298
3) D.C. Public Schools	DC	$9,187	16) Buffalo City	NY	$7,283
4) Paterson City	NJ	$8,995	17) Minneapolis Special	MN	$7,273
5) Rochester City	NY	$8,972	18) Madison Metropolitan	WI	$7,199
6) Hartford Public Schools	CT	$8,956	19) Lansing City	MI	$7,106
7) Kansas City	MO	$8,788	20) Milwaukee City	WI	$6,978
8) Jersey City	NJ	$8,424	21) Grand Rapids PSD	MI	$6,976
9) Pittsburgh City	PA	$8,386	22) Flint City	MI	$6,946
10) Syracuse City	NY	$7,966	23) Atlanta Public Schools	GA	$6,924
11) Boston City	MA	$7,782	24) Richmond City Schools	VA	$6,856
12) Bridgeport City Schools	CT	$7,708	25) Howard County	MD	$6,605
13) Montgomery County	MD	$7,505			

TABLE 2.

District	State	Per-pupil spending	District	State	Per-pupil spending
1) Davis County	UT	$3,038	14) Montgomery County	AL	$3,671
2) Alpine	UT	$3,074	15) Las Cruces	NM	$3,679
3) Weber County	UT	$3,162	16) Mesa Unified	AZ	$3,683
4) Jordan	UT	$3,204	17) Washington SD 6	AZ	$3,693
5) Granite	UT	$3,208	18) Onslow County	NC	$3,703
6) Terrebone Parish	LA	$3,273	19) Fairfield-Suisun JUSD	CA	$3,722
7) Shelby County	TN	$3,297	20) Deer Valley	AZ	$3,766
8) Mobile County	AL	$3,321	21) Rutherford County	TN	$3,770
9) Montgomery County	TN	$3,349	22) Berkley County	SC	$3,792
10) Peoria Unified	AZ	$3,477	23) Aiken County	SC	$3,818
11) Sumner County	TN	$3,517	24) Paradise Valley	AZ	$3,823
12) Baldwin County	AL	$3,610	25) Albuquerque	NM	$3,868
13) Lafayette Parish SB	LA	$3,618			

Geography appears to account for the majority of the difference in spending. Districts in the Northeast make up 13 of the top 14 in spending. But why is Newark spending 42 percent more per student than New York City — a short drive away? Why do Michigan and Wisconsin districts spend more than Ohio and Illinois districts? Why do mostly white Utah districts spend less than mostly black Alabama districts? How can the Fairfield-Suisun Joint Unified School District — 50 miles from San Francisco — spend only $3,722 per student?

These tables also bring into question the widely held belief that urban districts are starved for resources compared to nonurban districts. While it is likely that suburban districts with enrollments under 20,000 might outspend large urban districts, these statistics indicate that, in general, the large urban districts are spending more per-pupil than

the large suburban districts. Why?

Perhaps if we examined where the money is spent we could answer those questions. How are current expenditures determined and how are they categorized? The standard approach to current expenditures is to divide them into functions: instruction, student services, instructional services, general administration, school administration, operation and maintenance, student transportation, student support services, food services, and enterprise operations.

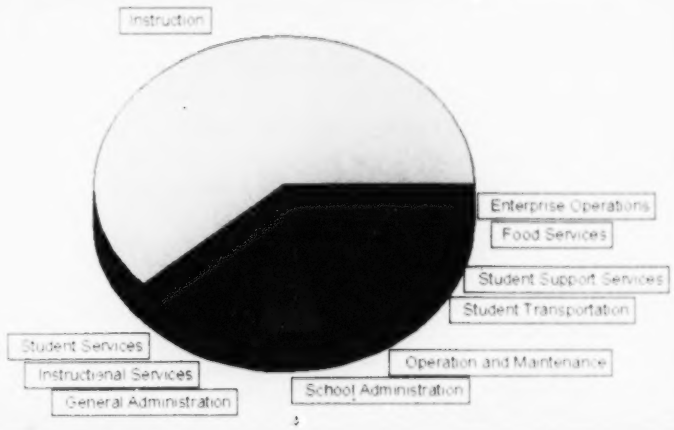
Instruction is classroom spending, including the cost of the teacher and classroom supplies.
Student services include guidance, health, attendance and speech pathology services.
Instructional services include curriculum development, staff training, libraries and media centers.
General administration is the off-site bureaucracy at district, county, state and federal levels.
School administration includes principals, vice principals and other on-site administrators.
Operation and maintenance are costs associated with the buildings and structures.
Student transportation is self-explanatory.
Student support services is a category for miscellaneous expenditures for various special programs.
Food services includes the cost of providing breakfasts, lunches and snacks to students.
Enterprise operations include the cost of operating school bookstores or computer centers.

The U.S. Department of Education breaks down the spending percentages in each category for us, as shown in Table 3. The numbers are for the entire United States for the 1994-95 school year.

TABLE 3. Current Expenditures

TABLE 3.

Current expenditures	100.0%
Instruction	61.7%
Student services	4.8%
Instructional services	4.0%
General administration	2.3%
School administration	5.8%
Operation and maintenance	10.1%
Student transportation	4.1%
Student support services	2.7%
Food services	4.2%
Enterprise operations	0.3%



It bears noting that the percentages hardly vary by district. That is, wealthy and poor school districts allocate their funds in approximately these same percentages no matter where they are located.

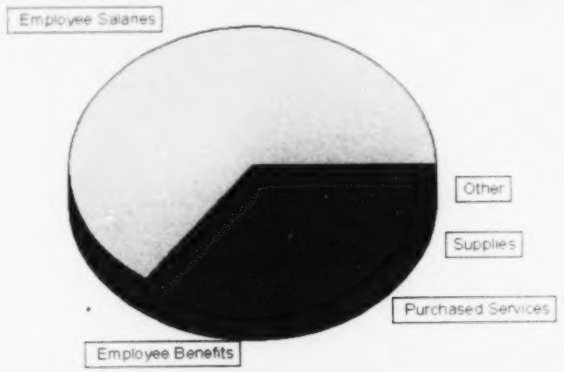
Expressed in such a way, these percentages are designed to solicit a particular response, which would be: "Well, more than 61 percent spent in the classroom, about another 16 percent that directly benefits students, 10 percent on maintenance, and only 8 percent on administration. Not bad." That is a satisfactory response for most school officials, but it doesn't go far enough. We've determined where we spent the cash, but who received it? Obviously not the students, so it must be the employees.

Education is without a doubt a labor-intensive enterprise. But just how much education spending goes to labor might come as a shock to some people. Let's re-categorize the current expenditures for 1994-95, this time dividing them more simply. Table 4 breaks spending into salaries, benefits, purchased services, supplies, and other.

TABLE 4. Current Expenditures

TABLE 4.

Current expenditures	100.0%
Employee salaries	65.2%
Employee benefits	17.7%
Purchased services	8.5%
Supplies	7.1%
Other	1.5%



Expressed this way, we might expect a different type of response, which is: "Almost 83 percent goes toward salaries and benefits?!" Suddenly, concerns about teachers spending their own money on classroom supplies don't seem so cut-and-dried anymore. Are they spending money that should have been allocated to supplies rather than to them in the first place? It raises huge unanswered questions about the education labor pool. Is better compensation buying us better teachers, administrators and principals? Are more highly qualified people entering the teaching profession because of the pay and benefits? Have we tapped out the education labor market, meaning higher wages will only benefit those already in education? Or do we need to make a quantum leap in salaries, increasing them by as much as 50 percent to attract those who would otherwise become accountants, lawyers, doctors and engineers? It bears mentioning that the percentage of spending that has been going to salaries and benefits has been slowly increasing over the last five years. So the question is no longer: Should we spend more on education? With 83 cents of every dollar going to labor, the question is: Should we pay education employees more money?

Of course, the term "education employees" covers a lot of ground. It includes everyone from superintendents to custodians, librarians and secretaries. The number of non-teaching school employees has become a bone of contention in the education policy debate. It enters into debates about administrative costs and decentralization of authority and responsibility for decision-making. Once again, advocates for one side or the other can manipulate the figures, usually by altering categories, in favor of their position. In order to avoid problems over who is an administrator, who is primary staff and who is support staff, etc., Table 5 classifies school employees by *physical proximity to students.* In other words, they are placed in categories determined by how far removed from the classroom they are. First we have teachers, whose primary work is done in the classroom. Then we have school staff, such as principals, assistant principals, support staff, library staff, instructional aides and guidance counselors, who are those people outside of the classroom but inside the school. Then we have district staff, who are officials, administrators and support staff who work away from the school but inside the region where the school is located. Finally, we have other staff, who are those education employees who work outside — or above — the district level.

Table 5 ranks each state and the District of Columbia in percentage terms. The state with the highest

percentage of teachers among total staff is ranked number one. By adding the numbers to the right, the reader may draw ever larger concentric circles around the students. The percentages are based on full-time equivalent employment figures reported for Fall 1995. Some state's totals may not equal exactly 100% due to rounding. The percentages for the United States as a whole are: teachers — 52.0%, school staff — 19.8%, district staff — 4.6%, other staff — 23.6%.

TABLE 5.

State	Teachers	School Staff	District Staff	Other Staff
1) Rhode Island	63.5	18.2	3.9	14.4
2) Minnesota	62.7	17.2	4.7	15.4
3) Hawaii	62.3	17.5	5.0	15.1
4) Idaho	58.6	19.1	3.5	18.8
5) Nevada	58.5	17.9	3.3	20.4
6) Wisconsin	57.9	19.5	4.4	18.2
7) District of Columbia	56.4	15.2	8.9	19.5
8) Massachusetts	55.4	18.4	6.9	19.3
9) Ohio	55.2	14.7	7.7	22.4
10) Connecticut	54.5	21.7	4.6	19.2
11) Delaware	54.5	17.4	4.5	23.6
12) West Virginia	54.5	13.9	6.5	25.1
13) Maryland	54.4	18.9	2.4	24.2
14) North Dakota	54.3	20.1	4.7	20.9
15) Illinois	54.3	19.6	4.8	21.2
16) Virginia	54.3	19.1	3.6	22.9
17) Montana	54.2	22.0	4.2	19.6
18) Tennessee	54.0	22.3	4.0	19.7
19) Arkansas	53.8	17.9	2.7	25.6
20) Kansas	53.7	19.2	4.0	23.2
21) Utah	53.6	23.9	3.4	19.0
22) New Hampshire	53.3	24.7	4.1	17.8
23) South Carolina	53.3	21.3	3.4	22.0
24) South Dakota	53.3	23.2	4.5	19.1
25) New Jersey	53.2	19.4	6.0	21.4
26) Pennsylvania	53.0	17.5	5.1	24.4
27) Nebraska	52.9	19.4	4.0	23.7
28) Alabama	52.9	17.5	3.0	26.6
29) Colorado	52.5	21.0	5.7	20.8
30) Maine	52.3	23.3	4.2	20.2
31) North Carolina	52.2	26.6	3.6	17.7
32) Iowa	52.1	23.0	2.7	22.2
33) California	52.0	22.9	6.0	19.1
34) Texas	52.0	18.5	1.3	28.3
35) Oregon	51.8	25.8	4.9	17.5
36) Washington	51.4	20.7	4.8	23.2
37) Wyoming	51.2	21.1	2.7	25.1
38) New York	51.0	14.2	7.8	27.0
39) Louisiana	50.5	20.5	2.1	26.9
40) Arizona	50.1	25.2	1.6	23.1
41) Vermont	49.1	29.5	4.6	16.8
42) Alaska	49.1	22.9	6.4	21.6
43) New Mexico	48.3	22.5	7.2	22.0
44) Florida	48.3	20.8	6.2	24.6
45) Georgia	48.1	22.0	3.8	26.0
46) Indiana	48.0	23.9	2.4	25.7
47) Missouri	48.0	18.2	5.4	28.4
48) Mississippi	47.6	22.9	4.5	24.9
49) Oklahoma	47.0	19.9	1.5	31.7
50) Michigan	46.9	17.8	3.4	31.9
51) Kentucky	46.3	21.8	4.5	27.3

Table 5 provides a good picture of exactly where each state's school system is applying its labor force. Though Vermont (at 49.1%) and Michigan (at 46.9%) both have relatively low ratios of teachers as a percentage of their total number of education employees, there are important differences between them. Vermont employs a higher than average percentage of staff at the school site. Michigan, on the other hand, has the highest percentage of employees outside the district level of any state.

California and Texas have an identical percentage of teachers (52%), but California has 6% of its employees at the district level compared to 1.3% of Texas employees. Texas leads California in employees outside the district — 28.3% compared to 19.1%. Why?

The purpose of examining these numbers is to determine whether the labor pool is applied in the most efficient place. Is a large percentage of employees outside the district reducing redundancy at the district level, or is it a bloated bureaucracy? Are large school staffs needed to free teachers to instruct students, or are too many specialists and administrators reducing the funds available to hire more teachers? There may be very good reasons why 11 states have more non-teaching education employees than they have teachers, but state officials should be made to defend them.

But even in states where teachers are outnumbered, the primary budgetary factors for schools are teachers' pay and benefits. No other line-item comes close. Support for increased education spending is a *de facto* call for increased spending on teachers. It is a reality well understood by the teachers' unions, but barely appreciated by the taxpaying public and its representatives.

II. Teacher Salaries & Benefits

No topic in education is more liable to cause heated debate than the compensation paid to our nation's public school teachers. On one side are the teachers and their labor unions, who argue that they are being asked to provide more and more services without a corresponding increase in pay. The problems of modern America — broken homes, drug use, child abuse, teenage pregnancy — all have an impact on the learning environment. Every day, teachers and other school staff take on responsibilities that in past years would have been undertaken by parents and guardians. Why this is so, and whether it is a good or bad thing, is well beyond the realm of this study. However, teachers feel they are being asked to do more than just teach, and so should be paid accordingly.

Teachers also feel that higher salaries and benefits would reflect a larger measure of public respect for their profession. Teachers' union officials often say that teachers should receive respect comparable to that afforded doctors, lawyers, accountants and other professionals. Indeed, Sandra Feldman, president of the American Federation of Teachers, has been quoted as saying that beginning teachers should earn *wages* comparable to those afforded beginning doctors and lawyers.

On the other side of the debate are those who argue that teachers are overpaid for the results they achieve. The newspapers are filled with horror stories of high school seniors who can't find Mexico on a map, who have no idea in which half-century the Civil War was fought, and who are unable to decipher a bus schedule. Who are we to blame for this state of affairs, these critics argue, besides the teachers?

A number of politicians and public policy organizations are seeking ways to tie compensation to student performance. Kentucky instituted a system of bonuses for improved test scores (with controversial results). There is a major push for accountability at all levels of public education. Along with this push, there are various movements to provide vouchers to public school students, which they could then use to attend the school of their choice, including private schools.

The great hidden cornerstone to the voucher debate is the role that teacher compensation plays. Vouchers are typically for a sum about half of what it would cost to educate a child in public schools. The reduced per-pupil spending is part of the appeal. Students will be able to get as good an education (or better) at half the cost. How? How can private schools educate children for half the price? While private schools operate with significantly smaller overhead costs and administrative staffs, the cost differential is mostly due to lower pay and benefits for their teachers. On average, public school teachers make 50 percent more than private school teachers.

Voucher supporters don't publicize this because they don't want people to believe they are only out to deflate teacher salaries. Teachers and their unions don't publicize this because they don't want people to believe they are only out to inflate teacher salaries. So, despite its importance in motivating each side — the pro-voucher side's aim to improve academic results at reduced costs, the union's aim to protect its membership — teacher salaries are never mentioned in voucher debates.

Public school teacher compensation is chiefly determined by political forces, not market forces. Differences in salaries from state to state are determined by the status of the economy, collective bargaining laws, and the mood of the public. Differences from district to district are usually determined by the tax base and the relative skill of the district and union negotiators at the bargaining table. Both the National Education Association and the American Federation of Teachers closely track teacher salaries. They release these results every year, ranking the states in order of average teacher salary. Their figures differ, but are close enough to each other, and to independent data, to suggest they are reasonably accurate.

But what do such rankings really tell us? That Connecticut pays its teachers more than South Dakota does? That is hardly surprising, since Connecticut pays workers at all levels more than South Dakota does. Mississippi cannot be expected to keep teacher salaries on a par with New Jersey's. So how do we generate more comparable numbers? Applying regional cost-of-living factors to the mix could do it, but then that data would also be open to errors and misapplications.

Table 6 simply takes two sets of figures: NEA's average annual teacher salary state rankings for 1995-96 and the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics average annual salary state rankings for all workers in 1995. The difference between the two is then expressed in percentage terms and the states are ranked. The state that pays its teachers the greatest percentage more than that state's average worker is ranked first. NEA uses the school year and the Labor Department uses the calendar year, but the lack of precision in the raw numbers should not significantly affect the percentages — particularly for state-to-state comparisons. The United States as a whole paid its public school teachers 34.9% more than its average workers earned.

TABLE 6.

State	Percentage By Which Teacher's Wages Exceeded Worker's Wages	State	Percentage By Which Teacher's Wages Exceeded Worker's Wages
1) Pennsylvania	65.2	27) South Carolina	35.8
2) Rhode Island	59.8	28) Nevada	35.7
3) Vermont	53.9	29) Idaho	35.3
4) Oregon	53.7	30) Minnesota	34.9
5) Wisconsin	52.1	31) Florida	34.9
6) Alaska	51.8	32) New Hampshire	34.5
7) Kansas	48.2	33) Hawaii	32.7
8) Indiana	47.3	34) Tennessee	32.3
9) Michigan	46.7	35) South Dakota	32.2
10) Montana	43.1	36) North Dakota	31.6
11) Connecticut	43.1	37) Mississippi	31.1
12) Maine	42.2	38) Massachusetts	30.6
13) Iowa	41.5	39) Colorado	30.4
14) Maryland	41.3	40) Missouri	29.9
15) Wyoming	41.3	41) Utah	29.5
16) Kentucky	40.8	42) Virginia	29.4
17) Ohio	40.8	43) Georgia	29.3
18) Nebraska	40.8	44) Alabama	28.4
19) Delaware	39.2	45) Arizona	28.3
20) New Jersey	38.7	46) New Mexico	26.6
21) Washington	37.9	47) Oklahoma	25.3
22) New York	37.7	48) North Carolina	25.0
23) California	37.6	49) Texas	19.0
24) West Virginia	36.9	50) Louisiana	12.2
25) Illinois	35.9	51) District of Columbia	2.9
26) Arkansas	35.8		

Table 6 lends a different perspective to salary comparisons. The rankings of some states did not change appreciably when the wages of average workers were taken into account. Louisiana ranked 50th in teacher salaries and it ranks 50th in percentage above workers' wages. Michigan went from 6th to 9th. But other states had huge differences. South Dakota, ranked last in teacher salaries, moves up to 35th in this formulation. Arkansas, 46th in teacher salaries, moved up to 26th.

It worked in reverse as well. Massachusetts, #9 in teacher salaries, fell to 38th. The most dramatic change occurred with the District of Columbia. Ranked 7th in teacher salaries, DC fell to dead last when compared to other workers in the district.

It is surprising to find such a wide range of percentages. One would expect that rich states and poor states would pay their teachers similar amounts relative to the rest of the workers in those states. But that is clearly not the case. Louisiana teachers are paid poorly, *and* are paid poorly relative to other Louisiana workers. Pennsylvania teachers are paid well, *and* are paid extraordinarily well relative to other Pennsylvania workers. DC teachers are paid well, but not so well compared to other DC workers.

What accounts for these differences? Are states at the top of the list more generous to teachers? Are teachers' unions stronger there? Or are there simply more experienced, therefore more high-paid teachers, than new, low-paid teachers?

The differences between the salaries of the average teacher and the new teacher can be significant. It's useful to know about the average teacher, but when we seek to increase education spending, and therefore teacher salaries, our primary purpose is to attract more highly qualified candidates to the profession. Teacher attrition (discussed later) is not a major issue. The evidence suggests that once teachers successfully complete their probationary status, they are unlikely to leave the profession until retirement. Increasing salaries to increase teacher *retention* is unnecessary. Increasing salaries to improve teacher *recruiting* may be necessary, but it will require an examination of a different set of wage statistics — the starting salaries of teachers.

The American Federation of Teachers collects data on the minimum, or beginning, salaries of teachers in each state. Simply listing these salaries has some value, allowing us to determine how initially attractive the teaching profession would be to a prospective candidate. But people don't choose career fields merely on the basis of starting salary, but also on the opportunity for, and swiftness of, wage advancement. In other words, prospective teachers are not just interested in what they will be paid now, but in what they will be paid in three, five and seven years.

Table 7 ranks the states by starting teacher salaries, based on the AFT data for 1995-96. It also includes a percentage figure termed the "climb." The difference between starting salary and average salary for each state is expressed as a percentage of starting salary — the higher the number, the steeper the "climb" to average salary and the smaller the number, the more shallow the climb. The reasoning behind the climb statistic is that prospective teachers would be more likely to take a $20,000 position with a steep climb than a $20,000 position with a shallow climb. The starting teacher salary in the United States as a whole was $24,507, with a climb of 53.6%.

TABLE 7.

State	Starting Salary	Climb	State	Starting Salary	Climb
1) Alaska	34,800	36.1	27) New Hampshire	23,510	52.2
2) New Jersey	31,435	55.6	28) Florida	23,508	41.8
3) Pennsylvania	29,514	56.2	29) Texas	22,642	39.7
4) Connecticut	28,840	76.6	30) New Mexico	22,634	28.6
5) Maryland	26,846	53.6	31) Kentucky	22,457	47.3
6) New York	28,749	67.4	32) West Virginia	22,011	46.1
7) Illinois	26,753	51.4	33) Missouri	21,996	47.2
8) District of Columbia	25,937	63.6	34) Wyoming	21,900	44.2
9) Massachusetts	25,815	66.7	35) South Carolina	21,791	44.1
10) California	25,762	63.7	36) Kansas	21,607	50.6
11) Michigan	25,635	85.0	37) Tennessee	21,537	53.8
12) Nevada	25,576	54.6	38) Colorado	21,472	69.4
13) Virginia	25,500	36.0	39) Iowa	21,338	51.7
14) Hawaii	25,436	45.6	40) Nebraska	21,299	47.9
15) Alabama	24,824	26.2	41) Arkansas	21,189	40.9
16) Rhode Island	24,754	69.0	42) Maine	20,725	58.6
17) Georgia	24,693	38.2	43) North Carolina	20,620	47.5
18) Oregon	24,592	59.9	44) Utah	20,544	47.9
19) Washington	24,590	54.5	45) Ohio	20,355	87.1
20) Wisconsin	24,560	53.0	46) Mississippi	20,150	37.4
21) Vermont	24,445	48.3	47) Montana	19,992	46.9
22) Delaware	24,300	66.8	48) Idaho	19,667	57.1
23) Indiana	24,216	55.6	49) South Dakota	19,609	34.5
24) Oklahoma	24,187	20.6	50) Louisiana	19,406	38.1
25) Arizona	24,042	28.3	51) North Dakota	18,225	48.0
26) Minnesota	23,998	53.5			

The initial reaction to teacher recruitment problems is to raise starting salaries. This is likely to increase inflow to the profession, but it may not have as great an effect as needed. All other factors being equal, an increase in starting salaries means a smaller increase in average salaries. Depending on a number of factors and the structure of a pay raise, an increase in starting salaries may significantly flatten the climb, offsetting some of the positive effects of the raise. Compare the states ranked 15th and 16th in Table 7. Alabama's minimum salary is $24,824. Rhode Island's is $24,754. Since the cost of living in Rhode Island is much higher than that in Alabama, one might reason that it is easier to hire new teachers in Alabama than in Rhode Island. But when you account for the climb, the perspective changes. New Rhode Island teachers can expect a 69% climb while Alabama teachers can expect only slightly more than 26%.

Ohio, at $20,355, ranks 45th among states in starting teacher salary. This ranking may be politically useful in bargaining for better pay for starting teachers, but the 87.1% climb is certainly an important factor in choosing teaching over other professions. The results of Table 7 may reduce the importance of starting salary as a measure of recruitment efforts. This does not end the debate, however. School boards can use the information to argue against higher starting salaries, but unions can argue that increases along the entire pay scale are a necessary element of teacher recruitment.

Often lost in the discussion of how much teachers make is how much they work. A teacher's work-year is significantly shorter than other professions' work-year. Teachers counter these formulations by claiming their work-day is longer than other professions' work-days because of uncompensated time spent grading papers, meeting with parents, etc. The question of how much teachers work needs answering if we are to make some sense of one side's depiction of teachers who are lazing around all summer, while the other side describes teachers as constantly working into the wee hours for slave wages.

We are presented with a problem at the outset. An empirical analysis of teachers' workload has yet to be done. No survey group or research organization follows teachers around all day, timing the hours they spend on school work. Statistics on the subject are highly dependent on collective bargaining agreements (which define how many hours teachers must work) and self-reporting by teachers (which tells us about working on their own time). These are subject to numerous biases and errors. There is a natural tendency to inflate the number of hours one spends on work, particularly if the work is uncompensated. Correcting for this bias may lead to other biases, so instead of trying to work toward a reasonable middle, Table 8 illustrates both extremes — denoted as "teacher maximum work" and "teacher minimum work." In neither case is any effect of sick days, leaves of absence, release time or other such personal manipulations of work time taken into account. All numbers are calculations based on an NEA survey conducted in 1997 for the 1995-96 school year. The average contract required 7.3 hours of work per day. Teachers reported working an average of 2.5 hours per day extra on uncompensated work for school. These two figures are the sole basis for the differences between the other maximum and minimum numbers. The projected annualized wage tells us how much teachers would make at the specified hourly wage for a 7.5 hour work day, 235 day work year, similar to an average professional's required work year.

TABLE 8.

	Teacher Maximum Work	Teacher Minimum Work
Classroom teacher average salary	$35,549	$35,549
Hours per day	9.8	7.3
Hours per year	1,823	1,358
Hourly wage	$19.50	$26.18
Projected annualized wage	$34,369	$46,142

We now have a new and better way to compare teacher's wages to those of other professionals. We can use the hourly wage, and by computing an hourly wage for accountants, managers or other professionals, we can compare the two. Or we can use the projected annualized wage to compare with other professionals' annual salaries.

Table 8 tells us that if we take teachers at their word regarding uncompensated work-time, their average annual wage for 1995-96 was the same as a professional who worked a normal year and earned $34,369. If we only account for the hours that a teacher is required to work, than that same professional would have had to earn $46,142 to match the average teacher.

How much we should rely on teacher self-reporting is a subjective judgment. It seems fair to say, however, that teachers do put in significant hours of work outside of school. It also seems fair to say the claim that this amounts to 2.5 hours per day, every day, sounds inflated. Perhaps teacher average salary *is* an accurate comparable figure, with extra hours teachers work offset by the number of days they don't work. Of course, an important factor not addressed in this comparison is the number of uncompensated hours other professionals work.

Since teachers do work an average of 186 days per year, what are they doing those other days? Previously unpublished data from the National Center for Education Statistics reveal that many of them are earning extra money. Table 9 lists this information for the 1993-94 school year. Extra duties include coaching sports, coordinating clubs and other activities for which the teacher is compensated during the school year. Summer school is compensated pay for teaching beyond the normal school year. Tutoring, other education work and other non-education work are jobs teachers maintain for other employers — not the district which pays their teacher salary.

TABLE 9.

	Number of Full-Time Teachers Performing This Work	Percentage of Full-Time Teacher Work Force
Classroom duties	2,340,443	100%
Extra duties	815,827	34.9%
Summer school	401,516	17.2%
Tutoring	118,603	5.1%
Other education work	80,104	3.4%
Other non-education work	237,177	10.1%

Please note that these numbers and percentages are not cumulative because of unknown overlap. A teacher who tutors *and* sells insurance during the summer will appear twice. Nevertheless, somewhere between 35 percent and 71 percent of teachers earn extra income. The amount they earned was large enough to raise the average teacher income by $2,345 that year. This additional income is not incorporated in average salary figures computed by NEA, AFT or the U.S. Department of Education.

Finally, salary is only one component of teacher compensation. Benefits — as we have seen in the per-pupil spending tables — are a significant expense for school districts and therefore a significant factor in teacher recruitment, hiring and retention. Salaries and benefits, taken together, are so significant that they constitute almost the entire amount of what we call "instructional spending." Table 10 ranks the 50 states and the District of Columbia in salary and benefits as a percentage of instructional spending. The figures are computed from U.S. Department of Education data for 1994-95. The U.S. average was 92.26%.

TABLE 10.

State	Salaries/Benefits As Percentage of Total Instructional Spending	State	Salaries/Benefits As Percentage of Total Instructional Spending
1) Arizona	96.03	27) California	91.97
2) West Virginia	96.00	28) Washington	91.93
3) Kentucky	95.96	29) Oklahoma	91.88
4) Indiana	95.46	30) Hawaii	91.82
5) New York	95.37	31) North Dakota	91.51
6) Nevada	95.36	32) Maryland	91.44
7) Virginia	95.08	33) Montana	91.43
8) Michigan	94.70	34) Nebraska	91.26
9) Louisiana	94.60	35) Texas	91.01
10) Georgia	94.47	36) District of Columbia	90.80
11) Arkansas	93.97	37) Connecticut	90.67
12) North Carolina	93.88	38) Wyoming	90.66
13) Kansas	93.84	39) Oregon	90.42
14) South Carolina	93.72	40) New Jersey	90.37
15) Alabama	93.46	41) Missouri	89.54
16) Tennessee	93.44	42) Alaska	89.49
17) Idaho	93.26	43) Florida	89.20
18) Ohio	93.04	44) Pennsylvania	89.01
19) Wisconsin	93.02	45) Maine	88.58
20) Minnesota	92.98	46) Iowa	88.55
21) New Mexico	92.91	47) Vermont	88.41
22) Delaware	92.87	48) South Dakota	88.38
23) Rhode Island	92.71	49) Utah	87.89
24) Mississippi	92.45	50) New Hampshire	87.80
25) Colorado	92.09	51) Massachusetts	85.61
26) Illinois	92.02		

Perhaps the biggest eye-openers here are the relatively low percentages that some high-paying states — Connecticut, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Alaska and Massachusetts — allocate to salaries and benefits. On the other side, Arizona, West Virginia and Kentucky are all middle-of-the-pack states in salaries, but they hold the top three spots in percentage allocated to salaries and benefits. Are the lower-ranked states in Table 10 spending more on books, supplies and other student services? Or are they simply generous with employee benefits relative to salaries? Table 11 gives us more insight into these questions. Using the same Department of Education data as in Table 10, Table 11 ranks the states according to a salary/benefit ratio. The figures are the number of cents spent on employee benefits for every dollar spent on salaries. The U.S. average is 26.6 cents.

TABLE 11.

State	Cents Spent On Benefits For Every Dollar of Salary	State	Cents Spent On Benefits For Every Dollar of Salary
1) West Virginia	36.5	27) New Mexico	25.7
2) Michigan	36.3	28) Virginia	25.4
3) Utah	35.5	29) Vermont	25.3
4) Delaware	34.7	30) North Dakota	24.9
5) Oregon	34.6	31) South Carolina	24.7
6) Maryland	34.3	32) North Carolina	24.4
7) Maine	33.5	33) Alaska	24.3
8) Wisconsin	33.3	34) Nebraska	24.3
9) Florida	33.2	35) Mississippi	24.2
10) Rhode Island	32.0	36) New Jersey	23.9
11) Pennsylvania	31.5	37) Iowa	23.9
12) Washington	31.1	38) Arkansas	23.8
13) Idaho	30.3	39) Alabama	23.2
14) California	29.6	40) Connecticut	23.1
15) New York	29.4	41) Tennessee	22.8
16) Indiana	28.8	42) Illinois	22.1
17) Wyoming	27.9	43) South Dakota	21.9
18) Hawaii	27.7	44) Oklahoma	20.6
19) District of Columbia	27.5	45) Kentucky	20.5
20) Georgia	27.5	46) Colorado	20.3
21) Nevada	27.3	47) New Hampshire	19.5
22) Ohio	27.1	48) Missouri	18.1
23) Massachusetts	27.1	49) Kansas	17.4
24) Louisiana	26.9	50) Arizona	15.9
25) Minnesota	26.8	51) Texas	14.9
26) Montana	26.7		

Remember, this is not a "#1 good, #51 bad" table. West Virginia is not spending *more* on benefits than Texas. Table 11 simply illustrates how compensation for instructors is divided up. West Virginia and Utah are low salary states, but they allocate a high percentage of funding to benefits. Connecticut is a high salary state, but it allocates a small percentage to benefits. Indeed, when benefits are taken into account, the bargaining position of some states' teachers are strengthened. Eight of the top 10 states in teacher salary fall out of the top 10 in benefit ratio. Rhode Island is 10th in salary and 10th in benefit ratio. Only one high salary state — Michigan — improved in the benefit ratio rankings. Looking at those statistics side-by-side, it's hard to argue against the notion that Michigan teachers are doing extremely well. Every state in the bottom 15 in salaries moved up in the benefit ratio ranking.

Again, discussing teacher salaries without taking benefits into account is leaving off over a quarter of the compensation picture. Prospective teachers certainly consider benefit packages when choosing one career over another, or one district over another. It is the total amount of compensation tendered to teachers that dictates what kind of work force public education will have.

The press has settled on per-pupil spending as the hallmark of public education finance. But the most recent U.S. Department of Education figures show that 57 percent of all we spend on education goes to pay the salaries and benefits of teachers. How about a way to measure per-teacher spending? And how can we relate that to the number of students affected by that spending?

Table 12 ranks the 50 states and District of Columbia by taking each state's per-pupil spending for 1994-95

(current expenditures divided by average daily attendance) and dividing it into each state's cost per teacher (average salary plus average benefits). The result is expressed as the "per-teacher rate" and is designed to complement, not replace, per-pupil spending. A simple example will illustrate: State X spends $5,000 per pupil. It spends $50,000 on the salary and benefits of the average teacher. Therefore, its per-teacher rate is 10.0. The per-teacher rate for the entire U.S. in 1994-95 was 7.74.

TABLE 12.

State	Per-Teacher Rate	State	Per-Teacher Rate
1) Utah	10.78	27) Delaware	7.49
2) California	10.66	28) Kentucky	7.45
3) Idaho	9.22	29) Wisconsin	7.26
4) Tennessee	9.09	30) Rhode Island	7.20
5) Alabama	8.71	31) West Virginia	7.14
6) Nevada	8.59	32) Iowa	7.12
7) Pennsylvania	8.23	33) Massachusetts	7.12
8) Michigan	8.16	34) New Hampshire	7.08
9) Mississippi	8.16	35) Louisiana	7.05
10) Indiana	8.13	36) Oklahoma	7.01
11) Hawaii	8.09	37) Kansas	6.99
12) Oregon	8.06	38) Connecticut	6.99
13) Washington	8.02	39) North Dakota	6.89
14) Virginia	8.00	40) Texas	6.87
15) Georgia	7.93	41) Missouri	6.84
16) Arkansas	7.91	42) Alaska	6.65
17) South Carolina	7.87	43) Maine	6.64
18) Illinois	7.85	44) South Dakota	6.64
19) New Mexico	7.81	45) Vermont	6.57
20) Arizona	7.80	46) Wyoming	6.50
21) Colorado	7.64	47) Nebraska	6.48
22) Minnesota	7.60	48) Montana	6.41
23) Florida	7.59	49) New York	6.40
24) Ohio	7.59	50) District of Columbia	5.97
25) North Carolina	7.55	51) New Jersey	5.84
26) Maryland	7.54		

The results can be interpreted a number of different ways. If your state appears at the bottom of the list, it could be because teachers are underpaid, or because non-teaching education employees are overpaid, or because your state spends more money on books and supplies. If your state appears at the top of the list, it could be because teachers are overpaid, or because education bureaucracies are small, or because per-pupil spending is too low. The fact that there are different interpretations is what sets the per-teacher rate apart from per-pupil spending alone as a statistic. Instead of arguments over "not enough" or "too much," the debate is altered to "where?" Are the salaries and benefits of New Jersey teachers really as high as their #4 national ranking would suggest, when it requires the full spending of fewer than six pupils to cover their cost? Conversely, with California in the midst of a massive program to reduce most elementary school classes to 20 students, should it really be necessary to use the full spending of more than half the class to cover the costs of providing it with a teacher?

There have always been public policy debates over education spending, but they always tend to be about what we will spend *next year*. Analysis of where we *have spent* our education dollars, and whether they did any good allocated in those amounts and percentages, is as forgotten as the Third Amendment. Spending is the most important issue, but not the only one. A few descriptive statistics also shed some light on the state of American public education.

III. Other Issues

There are a number of other subject areas deserving of a slightly different view. The three examined here all have the characteristic of being treated as a sub-category of public education policy, but their effect on the total education picture is enormous.

Special Education

In December 1997 the Economic Policy Institute, a liberal think tank with labor connections, released a report by Richard Rothstein entitled "Where's the Money Going?" His aim was to debunk the notion that spending on education is spiraling out of control. Using statistics from nine representative districts, Rothstein found that per-pupil spending rose 2 percent a year (in constant dollars) from 1967 to 1991, but slowed to 0.14 percent a year since then. "Basically, what we can say is that real per-pupil spending has been stagnant over the last five years," said Rothstein. As to where the money is going, Rothstein revealed that the percentage of school budgets used for special education rose from 3.6 percent in 1967 to 17.8 percent between 1967 and 1991. "The possibility that regular education is being shortchanged is something that policymakers may want to consider," he said.

Critics attacked the report on numerous levels. They questioned the sample size, the years examined, the fact that Rothstein used a modified measure of inflation instead of the Consumer Price Index, and Rothstein's political leanings. Nevertheless, he shed some light on a rarely discussed fact: that special education is using a larger and larger share of education spending. His conclusion — that it has come at the expense of regular education — is arguable, but it certainly calls for closer examination.

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) was passed in its first form by Congress in 1975 and amended twice since then. IDEA defines "children with disabilities" for the purpose of determining who qualifies for special education and who does not. The disabilities are: deafness; deaf-blindness; hearing impairments; visual impairments; speech or language impairments; orthopedic impairments; mental retardation; autism; traumatic brain injury; serious emotional disturbance; multiple disabilities; other health impairments; and specific learning disabilities.

The first six categories are fairly self-explanatory. They include children who have measurable physical limitations to their abilities to hear, see, speak or move about. The next three categories affect a child's abilities to think and reason. "Serious emotional disturbance" is a well-articulated psychological condition. Multiple disabilities would include those children who have more than one disability, and "other health impairments" include heart conditions, tuberculosis, rheumatic fever, asthma, epilepsy, diabetes and a host of other well recognized diseases and conditions.

If you add together the number of children whose disabilities place them in those categories in 1995-96, you get a total of 2,451,000 students. But another 2,579,000 children fall into the final category: specific learning disabilities. Since the passage of IDEA, the number of children classified in this category has more than tripled. So, what is a "specific learning disability?" The National Information Center for Children and Youth with Disabilities provides this definition:

"A disorder in one or more of the basic psychological processes in understanding or in using language, spoken or written, which may manifest itself in an imperfect ability to listen, think, speak, read, write, spell or to do mathematical calculations. The term includes such conditions as perceptual disabilities, brain injury, minimal brain dysfunction, dyslexia, and developmental aphasia. The term does not include children who have learning problems which are primarily the result of visual, hearing, or motor disabilities, of mental retardation, of emotional disturbance, or of environmental, cultural, or economic disadvantage."

A large number of those categorized as having specific learning disabilities are clearly the result of better diagnoses. Students with dyslexia may have been improperly labeled mentally retarded 20 years ago. In such cases, the

specific learning disabilities category would grow while the mental retardation and speech impairment categories would decrease. This has, in fact, happened. However, it does not explain the rise in the total percentage of the student population now classified as disabled.

In 1976-77, the first school year after the passage of IDEA, students with disabilities made up 8.33 percent of total student enrollment. In 1995-96, that number swelled to 12.43 percent and is still growing. The question naturally arises: are there really that many more students with disabilities today than 20 years ago?

There are many motivations for schools and districts to classify students as disabled or not disabled. Most of them have very little to do with the students' medical or psychological condition. On the one hand, classifying a student as disabled gets that student more individual attention, more services, more federal money and has the added advantage of removing that student from regular standardized testing. Some schools have been accused of doing just that in order to inflate their test scores. On the other hand, some districts are using the disability identification system as a cost-cutting measure. If you have an overabundance of students with disabilities, it starts to eat into your normal operating budget. Districts have been accused of classifying students not on their conditions, but on their costs.

There are signs that some states are beginning to look "one yard below." In February, the Connecticut Department of Education released a report that questioned the motivations of the special education bureaucracy. "Special education is often considered the first, rather than last, option for students with learning and behavior problems, even though many of the students who are referred are clearly not disabled," the report stated. "The labels used to identify special education students are unclear and applied inconsistently. The labels are perceived as broad and open to wide interpretation. Once labeled, few children ever exit from special education."

The report's recommendations are astonishing. Perhaps the most controversial of its proposals is a call for increased emphasis on teaching reading, including phonics and language fundamentals. The implication is clear: education bureaucracies have been making illiteracy a disease. Not surprisingly, the report, a year in the making, is under severe attack. Whatever its merits or faults, the report will prompt a necessary dialogue on special education.

Teacher Mobility and Peer Review

Horror stories abound about how difficult it is to get rid of bad public school teachers. Strong unions and even stronger tenure laws lead to tales of six-year dismissal procedures, teachers paid a year's salary to resign and hundreds of thousands of dollars spent in legal and administrative costs. The state of Colorado enacted reforms after managing to fire only five teachers in the last three years. In Florida last year, only 23 of 119,000 public school teachers were dismissed for incompetence.

Bob Chase, president of the National Education Association, has generated a great deal of controversy inside the 2.3 million-member union — and a great deal of positive press coverage outside it — for his championing of peer review. For the first time in its history, NEA dropped its adamant opposition to the concept of teachers assessing each's other work. Chase suggested in a landmark speech before the National Press Club in February 1997 that NEA take the lead in policing the teaching profession and, if necessary, help remove bad teachers. "I believe it is exactly the right course for the new NEA," he said.

Chase and his supporters regularly cite the Peer Assistance and Review (PAR) program as their model. Established in 1986 by NEA's affiliate in Columbus, Ohio, the PAR program designates senior teachers to serve as full-time consultants in the classroom. They assist, monitor and evaluate every new teacher hired by the Columbus School District, as well as any veteran teachers who are referred to the program because of unsatisfactory performance.

There is no shortage of claims about the success of the PAR program. Interestingly, the emphasis (and sometimes the statistics) changes depending upon the audience being addressed. In front of the National Press Club, Chase said, "But in roughly 10 percent of cases, the consultants — members of our union — take the lead in counseling a

problem teacher to leave the profession . . . and, if necessary, they recommend dismissal." An article in *NEA Today* reads, "By the end of this school year, five to 7 percent of the 400 new teachers hired in Columbus, Ohio, won't be back. They'll get a 'non-renewal,' based on the recommendation of a teacher who has spent more than 30 hours observing their work in the classroom." Another article in the same issue says, "About 20 percent of the experienced teachers who go through the program leave the school system." John Grossman, president of the Columbus Education Association and architect of the PAR program, told the *New York Times*, "We let go five to 7 percent annually, more than four times as many as the administration dismissed before this program."

Differing numbers and mixing of terms are generally bad signs when assessing education programs — particularly when the statistics are so easy to check.

PAR program consultants review every new teacher who enters the district. The consultants then recommend renewal or nonrenewal for each new teacher. But new teachers are probationary anyway. In Ohio, teachers receive their professional certificate after three years of teaching. Until then, teachers do not have tenure protections. The PAR program provides the most peer review to the teachers who are easiest to dismiss.

The number of tenured teachers referred to the PAR program is extraordinarily small. In its first eight years, PAR consultants reviewed the performance of only 123 veteran Columbus teachers, or fewer than 16 per year. In a pool of about 4,500 veteran teachers, that comes to about 1/3 of 1 percent annually.

Similar peer review programs established by the American Federation of Teachers exhibit similar numbers. In Rochester, New York, AFT's peer review program assessed only ½ of 1 percent of veteran teachers. Another AFT program in Toledo, Ohio, referred only 41 veteran teachers over a 12-year period — a 2/10 of 1 percent participation rate.

The PAR program makes claims both for increased retention in the district and for the weeding out of unqualified teachers. During the 1996-97 school year, Columbus hired 221 new public school teachers, of whom 20 did not return this year. The immediate assumption is that the program identified those who would not succeed as teachers and counseled them out of the profession, or recommended non-renewal. Without anything with which to compare, 9 percent sounds like a reasonable number. But let's take a closer look. Table 13 is a list of the national teacher mobility figures for 1994-95.

Table 13.

Full-time teaching experience	Remained at same school	Remained in teaching but changed schools	Left teaching
Less than 1 year	79.7	11.1	9.3
1 year	81.2	12.4	6.4
2 years	76.4	14.6	9.1
3 years	81.4	10.8	7.8
4 to 9 years	83.0	9.9	7.1
10 to 19 years	89.1	6.6	4.4
20 to 24 years	92.5	2.8	4.6
25 years or more	84.9	4.1	11.1

It is difficult to see how Columbus' numbers are very different than what they would be if there were no program at all. Perhaps Columbus is keeping the best 91% and getting rid of the worst 9% — something which is unlikely to happen without a program in place. But how do we know? Veteran teachers are not evaluated. The Columbus Education Association breaks down PAR's nine-year results this way:

3,091 enrolled
2,893 successful (93.6%)
81 non-renewed or resigned (2.6%)
73 resigned before evaluation (2.4%)
44 declined contract (1.4%)

Modest results, but not bad considering the teacher dismissal horror stories from around the country. The problem with aggregate statistics like these is that teachers don't teach in the aggregate — that is, Johnny's teacher may have been good nine years ago, but may be very bad now. In fact, Johnny's teacher may be teaching an entirely different grade or subject now. More helpful to parents or administrators is to know what percentage of the total teaching workforce is referred for peer review each year and how many of them are removed.

We know that every new teacher is required to enroll in PAR. Last year, Columbus hired 221 new teachers. If the average number of veteran teachers was assigned to PAR, that would mean an additional 16 teachers, for a total of 237. Columbus has a total workforce of 4,800 teachers. Thus, only 5 percent of them were reviewed by PAR consultants last year. Of those 237, 24 left voluntarily or were non-renewed. That's 10 percent of those who were reviewed, *but only ½ of 1 percent of the total teacher workforce.* What Bob Chase, NEA and its Columbus affiliate are supporting is a system that keeps 99.5 percent of the same teachers in place for the next year. This can hardly be considered reform.

In fact, even these numbers are inflated because the PAR system takes credit for teachers who resign after enrollment in the program. This disguises the fact that school districts are still at the mercy of teachers who refuse to resign. In the first eight years of the PAR program, the Columbus School Board fired exactly *two* teachers.

Again, attitudes may be changing. The Toledo School District is unhappy after 13 years of the nation's very first peer review program, conducted by the Toledo Federation of Teachers. The district wants principals to conduct evaluations of veteran teachers. The union has refused and contract negotiations have been held up.

Teacher Demographics

The gender, racial and ethnic make-up of the nation's public work force has become a political football. Efforts to end quotas, affirmative action, racial preferences, or whatever term one chooses to use, has become one of America's most contentious issues. There have been some attempts to discuss the make-up of the public school teacher force, but usually these are limited to exchanges about how to increase minority hiring.

"Classrooms everywhere are starved for good teachers of color, particularly black and Hispanic men," wrote NEA President Bob Chase in a January 1998 editorial. He discussed the importance of having role models for minority students and described the union's efforts to recruit minority teachers.

Chase's focus, like that of many people who address the issue, is *prescriptive*. What do we do about the lack of minority teachers? But it is difficult to find research that is *descriptive*. What effect is the make-up of the current work force having on education?

A great deal of soul-searching, social upheaval, protests and legislative action was required to integrate and diversify the nation's student bodies. Monumental efforts were made to overcome resistance to integration. There are still political battles today over whether all-male colleges, all-black fraternities or all-female math classes constitute violations of the law. Diversity and integration have become such a standard to be reached in education that a backlash has been created, causing people to question diversity for diversity's sake.

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